Key Terms

Asch effect group majority influences an individual's judgment, even when that judgment is inaccurate

actor-observer bias phenomenon of explaining other people's behaviors are due to internal factors and our own behaviors are due to situational forces

ageism prejudice and discrimination toward individuals based solely on their age

aggression seeking to cause harm or pain to another person

altruism humans' desire to help others even if the costs outweigh the benefits of helping

attitude evaluations of or feelings toward a person, idea, or object that are typically positive or negative

attribution explanation for the behavior of other people

bullying a person, often an adolescent, being treated negatively repeatedly and over time

bystander effect situation in which a witness or bystander does not volunteer to help a victim or person in distress

central route persuasion logic-driven arguments using data and facts to convince people of an argument's worthiness

cognitive dissonance psychological discomfort that arises from a conflict in a person's behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs that runs counter to one's positive self-perception

collectivist culture culture that focuses on communal relationships with others such as family, friends, and community

companionate love type of love consisting of intimacy and commitment, but not passion; associated with close friendships and family relationships

confederate person who works for a researcher and is aware of the experiment, but who acts as a participant; used to manipulate social situations as part of the research design

confirmation bias seeking out information that supports our stereotypes while ignoring information that is inconsistent with our stereotypes

conformity when individuals change their behavior to go along with the group even if they do not agree with the group

consummate love type of love occurring when intimacy, passion, and commitment are all present

cyberbullying repeated behavior that is intended to cause psychological or emotional harm to another person and that takes place online

diffusion of responsibility tendency for no one in a group to help because the responsibility to help is spread throughout the group

discrimination negative actions toward individuals as a result of their membership in a particular group

dispositionism describes a perspective common to personality psychologists, which asserts that our behavior is determined by internal factors, such as personality traits and temperament

empathy capacity to understand another person's perspective—to feel what he or she feels

foot-in-the-door technique persuasion of one person by another person, encouraging a person to agree to a small favor, or to buy a small item, only to later request a larger favor or purchase of a larger item

fundamental attribution error tendency to overemphasize internal factors as attributions for behavior and underestimate the power of the situation

group polarization strengthening of the original group attitude after discussing views within the group

groupthink group members modify their opinions to match what they believe is the group consensus

homophily tendency for people to form social networks, including friendships, marriage, business relationships, and many other types of relationships, with others who are similar

homophobia prejudice and discrimination against individuals based solely on their sexual orientation

hostile aggression aggression motivated by feelings of anger with intent to cause pain

in-group bias preference for our own group over other groups

in-group group that we identify with or see ourselves as belonging to

individualistic culture culture that focuses on individual achievement and autonomy

informational social influence conformity to a group norm prompted by the belief that the group is competent and has the correct information

instrumental aggression aggression motivated by achieving a goal and does not necessarily involve intent to cause pain

internal factor internal attribute of a person, such as personality traits or temperament

just-world hypothesis ideology common in the United States that people get the outcomes they deserve

normative social influence conformity to a group norm to fit in, feel good, and be accepted by the group

obedience change of behavior to please an authority figure or to avoid aversive consequences

out-group group that we don't belong to—one that we view as fundamentally different from us

peripheral route persuasion one person persuades another person; an indirect route that relies on association of peripheral cues (such as positive emotions and celebrity endorsement) to associate positivity with a message

persuasion process of changing our attitude toward something based on some form of communication

prejudice negative attitudes and feelings toward individuals based solely on their membership in a particular group

prosocial behavior voluntary behavior with the intent to help other people

racism prejudice and discrimination toward individuals based solely on their race

reciprocity give and take in relationships

romantic love type of love consisting of intimacy and passion, but no commitment

scapegoating act of blaming an out-group when the in-group experiences frustration or is blocked from obtaining a goal

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script person's knowledge about the sequence of events in a specific setting

self-disclosure sharing personal information in relationships

self-fulfilling prophecy treating stereotyped group members according to our biased expectations only to have this treatment influence the individual to act according to our stereotypic expectations, thus confirming our stereotypic beliefs

self-serving bias tendency for individuals to take credit by making dispositional or internal attributions for positive outcomes and situational or external attributions for negative outcomes

sexism prejudice and discrimination toward individuals based on their sex

situationism describes a perspective that behavior and actions are determined by the immediate environment and surroundings; a view promoted by social psychologists

social exchange theory humans act as naïve economists in keeping a tally of the ratio of costs and benefits of forming and maintain a relationship, with the goal to maximize benefits and minimize costs

social facilitation improved performance when an audience is watching versus when the individual performs the behavior alone

social loafing exertion of less effort by a person working in a group because individual performance cannot be evaluated separately from the group, thus causing performance decline on easy tasks

social norm group's expectations regarding what is appropriate and acceptable for the thoughts and behavior of its members

social psychology field of psychology that examines how people impact or affect each other, with particular focus on the power of the situation

social role socially defined pattern of behavior that is expected of a person in a given setting or group

stanford prison experiment Stanford University conducted an experiment in a mock prison that demonstrated the power of social roles, social norms, and scripts

stereotype negative beliefs about individuals based solely on their membership in a group, regardless of their individual characteristics

triangular theory of love model of love based on three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment; several types of love exist, depending on the presence or absence of each of these components

Summary

12.1 What Is Social Psychology?

Social psychology is the subfield of psychology that studies the power of the situation to influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychologists categorize the causes of human behavior as those due to internal factors, such as personality, or those due to external factors, such as cultural and other social influences. Behavior is better explained, however, by using both approaches. Lay people tend to over-rely on dispositional explanations for behavior and ignore the power of situational influences, a perspective called the fundamental attribution error. People from individualistic cultures are more likely to display this bias versus people from collectivistic cultures. Our explanations for our own and others behaviors can be biased due to not having enough information about others' motivations for behaviors and by providing explanations that bolster our self-esteem.

12.2 Self-presentation
Human behavior is largely influenced by our social roles, norms, and scripts. In order to know how to act in a given situation, we have shared cultural knowledge of how to behave depending on our role in society. Social norms dictate the behavior that is appropriate or inappropriate for each role. Each social role has scripts that help humans learn the sequence of appropriate behaviors in a given setting. The famous Stanford prison experiment is an example of how the power of the situation can dictate the social roles, norms, and scripts we follow in a given situation, even if this behavior is contrary to our typical behavior.

12.3 Attitudes and Persuasion
Attitudes are our evaluations or feelings toward a person, idea, or object and typically are positive or negative. Our attitudes and beliefs are influenced not only by external forces, but also by internal influences that we control. An internal form of attitude change is cognitive dissonance or the tension we experience when our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are in conflict. In order to reduce dissonance, individuals can change their behavior, attitudes, or cognitions, or add a new cognition. External forces of persuasion include advertising; the features of advertising that influence our behaviors include the source, message, and audience. There are two primary routes to persuasion. The central route to persuasion uses facts and information to persuade potential consumers. The peripheral route uses positive association with cues such as beauty, fame, and positive emotions.

12.4 Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience
The power of the situation can lead people to conform, or go along with the group, even in the face of inaccurate information. Conformity to group norms is driven by two motivations, the desire to fit in and be liked and the desire to be accurate and gain information from the group. Authority figures also have influence over our behaviors, and many people become obedient and follow orders even if the orders are contrary to their personal values. Conformity to group pressures can also result in groupthink, or the faulty decision-making process that results from cohesive group members trying to maintain group harmony. Group situations can improve human behavior through facilitating performance on easy tasks, but inhibiting performance on difficult tasks. The presence of others can also lead to social loafing when individual efforts cannot be evaluated.

12.5 Prejudice and Discrimination
As diverse individuals, humans can experience conflict when interacting with people who are different from each other. Prejudice, or negative feelings and evaluations, is common when people are from a different social group (i.e., out-group). Negative attitudes toward out-groups can lead to discrimination. Prejudice and discrimination against others can be based on gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, or a variety of other social identities. In-group's who feel threatened may blame the out-groups for their plight, thus using the out-group as a scapegoat for their frustration.

12.6 Aggression
Aggression is seeking to cause another person harm or pain. Hostile aggression is motivated by feelings of anger with intent to cause pain, and instrumental aggression is motivated by achieving a goal and does not necessarily involve intent to cause pain Bullying is an international public health concern that largely affects the adolescent population. Bullying is repeated behaviors that are intended to inflict harm on the victim and can take the form of physical, psychological, emotional, or social abuse. Bullying has negative mental health consequences for youth including suicide. Cyberbullying is a newer form of bullying that takes place in an online environment where bullies can remain anonymous and victims are helpless to address the harassment. Despite the social norm of helping others in need, when there are many bystanders witnessing an emergency, diffusion of responsibility will lead to a lower likelihood of any one person helping.

12.7 Prosocial Behavior
Altruism is a pure form of helping others out of empathy, which can be contrasted with egoistic motivations for helping. Forming relationships with others is a necessity for social beings. We typically

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form relationships with people who are close to us in proximity and people with whom we share similarities. We expect reciprocity and self-disclosure in our relationships. We also want to form relationships with people who are physically attractive, though standards for attractiveness vary by culture and gender. There are many types of love that are determined by various combinations of intimacy, passion, and commitment; consummate love, which is the ideal form of love, contains all three components. When determining satisfaction and whether to maintain a relationship, individuals often use a social exchange approach and weigh the costs and benefits of forming and maintaining a relationship.

Review Questions

1. As a field, social psychology focuses on _____ in predicting human behavior.
a. personality traits
b. genetic predispositions
c. biological forces
d. situational factors

2. Making internal attributions for your successes and making external attributions for your failures is an example of _____.
a. actor-observer bias
b. fundamental attribution error
c. self-serving bias
d. just-world hypothesis

3. Collectivistic cultures are to _____ as individualistic cultures are to _____.
a. dispositional; situational
b. situational; dispositional
c. autonomy; group harmony
d. just-world hypothesis; self-serving bias

4. According to the actor-observer bias, we have more information about _____.
a. situational influences on behavior
b. influences on our own behavior
c. influences on others' behavior
d. dispositional influences on behavior

5. A(n) _____ is a set of group expectations for appropriate thoughts and behaviors of its members.
a. social role
b. social norm
c. script
d. attribution

6. On his first day of soccer practice, Jose suits up in a t-shirt, shorts, and cleats and runs out to the field to join his teammates. Jose's behavior is reflective of _____.
a. a script
b. social influence
c. good athletic behavior
d. normative behavior

7. When it comes to buying clothes, teenagers often follow social norms; this is likely motivated by _____.
a. following parents' rules
b. saving money
c. fitting in
d. looking good

8. In the Stanford prison experiment, even the lead researcher succumbed to his role as a prison supervisor. This is an example of the power of _____ influencing behavior.
a. scripts
b. social norms
c. conformity
d. social roles

9. Attitudes describe our _____ of people, objects, and ideas.
a. treatment
b. evaluations
c. cognitions
d. knowledge

10. Cognitive dissonance causes discomfort because it disrupts our sense of _____.
a. dependency
b. unpredictability
c. consistency
d. power

11. In order for the central route to persuasion to be effective, the audience must be _____ and _____.
a. analytical; motivated
b. attentive; happy
c. intelligent; unemotional
d. gullible; distracted

12. Examples of cues used in peripheral route persuasion include all of the following *except* _____.
a. celebrity endorsement
b. positive emotions
c. attractive models
d. factual information

13. In the Asch experiment, participants conformed due to _____ social influence.
a. informational
b. normative
c. inspirational
d. persuasive

14. Under what conditions will informational social influence be more likely?
a. when individuals want to fit in
b. when the answer is unclear
c. when the group has expertise
d. both b and c

15. Social loafing occurs when _____.
a. individual performance cannot be evaluated
b. the task is easy
c. both a and b
d. none of the above

16. If group members modify their opinions to align with a perceived group consensus, then _____ has occurred.
a. group cohesion
b. social facilitation
c. groupthink
d. social loafing

17. Prejudice is to _____ as discrimination is to _____.
a. feelings; behavior
b. thoughts; feelings
c. feelings; thoughts
d. behavior; feelings

18. Which of the following is *not* a type of prejudice?
a. homophobia
b. racism
c. sexism
d. individualism

19. _____ occurs when the out-group is blamed for the in-group's frustration.
a. stereotyping
b. in-group bias
c. scapegoating
d. ageism

20. When we seek out information that supports our stereotypes we are engaged in _____.
a. scapegoating
b. confirmation bias
c. self-fulfilling prophecy
d. in-group bias

21. Typically, bullying from boys is to _____ as bullying from girls is to _____.
a. emotional harm; physical harm
b. physical harm; emotional harm
c. psychological harm; physical harm
d. social exclusion; verbal taunting

22. Which of the following adolescents is least likely to be targeted for bullying?
a. a child with a physical disability
b. a transgender adolescent
c. an emotionally sensitive boy
d. the captain of the football team

23. The bystander effect likely occurs due to _____.
a. desensitization to violence
b. people not noticing the emergency
c. diffusion of responsibility
d. emotional insensitivity

24. Altruism is a form of prosocial behavior that is motivated by _____.
a. feeling good about oneself
b. selfless helping of others
c. earning a reward
d. showing bravery to bystanders

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25. After moving to a new apartment building, research suggests that Sam will be most likely to become friends with _____.
a. his next door neighbor
b. someone who lives three floors up in the apartment building
c. someone from across the street
d. his new postal delivery person

26. What trait do both men and women tend to look for in a romantic partner?
a. sense of humor
b. social skills
c. leadership potential
d. physical attractiveness

27. According to the triangular theory of love, what type of love is defined by passion and intimacy but no commitment?
a. consummate love
b. empty love
c. romantic love
d. liking

28. According to social exchange theory, humans want to maximize the _____ and minimize the _____ in relationships.
a. intimacy; commitment
b. benefits; costs
c. costs; benefits
d. passion; intimacy

Critical Thinking Questions

29. Compare and contrast situational influences and dispositional influences and give an example of each. Explain how situational influences and dispositional influences might explain inappropriate behavior.

30. Provide an example of how people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures would differ in explaining why they won an important sporting event.

31. Why didn't the "good" guards in the Stanford prison experiment object to other guards' abusive behavior? Were the student prisoners simply weak people? Why didn't they object to being abused?

32. Describe how social roles, social norms, and scripts were evident in the Stanford prison experiment. How can this experiment be applied to everyday life? Are there any more recent examples where people started fulfilling a role and became abusive?

33. Give an example (one *not* used in class or your text) of cognitive dissonance and how an individual might resolve this.

34. Imagine that you work for an advertising agency, and you've been tasked with developing an advertising campaign to increase sales of Bliss Soda. How would you develop an advertisement for this product that uses a central route of persuasion? How would you develop an ad using a peripheral route of persuasion?

35. Describe how seeking outside opinions can prevent groupthink.

36. Compare and contrast social loafing and social facilitation.

37. Some people seem more willing to openly display prejudice regarding sexual orientation than prejudice regarding race and gender. Speculate on why this might be.

38. When people blame a scapegoat, how do you think they choose evidence to support the blame?

39. Compare and contrast hostile and instrumental aggression.

40. What evidence discussed in the previous section suggests that cyberbullying is difficult to detect and prevent?

41. Describe what influences whether relationships will be formed.

42. The evolutionary theory argues that humans are motivated to perpetuate their genes and reproduce. Using an evolutionary perspective, describe traits in men and women that humans find attractive.

Personal Application Questions

43. Provide a personal example of an experience in which your behavior was influenced by the power of the situation.

44. Think of an example in the media of a sports figure—player or coach—who gives a self-serving attribution for winning or losing. Examples might include accusing the referee of incorrect calls, in the case of losing, or citing their own hard work and talent, in the case of winning.

45. Try attending a religious service very different from your own and see how you feel and behave without knowing the appropriate script. Or, try attending an important, personal event that you have never attended before, such as a bar mitzvah (a coming-of-age ritual in Jewish culture), a quinceañera (in some Latin American cultures a party is given to a girl who is turning 15 years old), a wedding, a funeral, or a sporting event new to you, such as horse racing or bull riding. Observe and record your feelings and behaviors in this unfamiliar setting for which you lack the appropriate script. Do you silently observe the action, or do you ask another person for help interpreting the behaviors of people at the event? Describe in what ways your behavior would change if you were to attend a similar event in the future?

46. Name and describe at least three social roles you have adopted for yourself. Why did you adopt these roles? What are some roles that are expected of you, but that you try to resist?

47. Cognitive dissonance often arises after making an important decision, called post-decision dissonance (or in popular terms, buyer's remorse). Describe a recent decision you made that caused dissonance and describe how you resolved it.

48. Describe a time when you or someone you know used the foot-in-the-door technique to gain someone's compliance.

49. Conduct a conformity study the next time you are in an elevator. After you enter the elevator, stand with your back toward the door. See if others conform to your behavior. Watch this **video (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/conformityexp)** for a candid camera demonstration of this phenomenon. Did your results turn out as expected?

50. Most students adamantly state that they would never have turned up the voltage in the Milligram experiment. Do you think you would have refused to shock the learner? Looking at your own past behavior, what evidence suggests that you would go along with the order to increase the voltage?

51. Give an example when you felt that someone was prejudiced against you. What do you think caused this attitude? Did this person display any discrimination behaviors and, if so, how?

52. Give an example when you felt prejudiced against someone else. How did you discriminate against them? Why do you think you did this?

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53. Have you ever experienced or witnessed bullying or cyberbullying? How did it make you feel? What did you do about it? After reading this section would you have done anything differently?

54. The next time you see someone needing help, observe your surroundings. Look to see if the bystander effect is in action and take measures to make sure the person gets help. If you aren't able to help, notify an adult or authority figure that can.

55. Think about your recent friendships and romantic relationship(s). What factors do you think influenced the development of these relationships? What attracted you to becoming friends or romantic partners?

56. Have you ever used a social exchange theory approach to determine how satisfied you were in a relationship, either a friendship or romantic relationship? Have you ever had the costs outweigh the benefits of a relationship? If so, how did you address this imbalance?

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